**Amendments to the Claims**:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A culture comprising a culture medium and a bacterium responsible for Whipple's disease, said bacterium being isolated and established in culture such that the bacterium can reproducibly and detectably multiply over time in the culture medium for at least 72 days as detected by inverted microscopy, wherein the bacterium is *Tropheryma whippelii*~~, and the bacterium has a doubling time of 18 days~~.

2.-9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) An antigen isolated from the *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium in the culture according to claim 1, wherein said antigen is a protein of 200 kD determined by polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis using the Western blotting technique, which reacts with a specific monoclonal antibody directed against the bacterium *Tropheryma whippelii* responsible for Whipple's disease or an antigen of said bacterium, said antibody being produced by a hybridoma deposited in the CNCM of the Institut Pasteur under the Deposit No. I-2411.

11. (Previously Presented) A method for the *in vitro* diagnosis of diseases associated with infections caused by *Tropheryma whippelii*, comprising contacting serum or any other biological fluid of a patient with a culture according to claim 1 or a *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium obtained from said culture, and detecting an immunological reaction.

12-14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously Presented) A method for the *in vitro* diagnosis according to claim 11, comprising:

- depositing a solution containing said *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium in or on a solid support;

- introducing serum or any other biological fluid into or onto said support;
- introducing a solution of a labeled antibody specific for a human immunoglobulin, which recognizes said bacterium, into or onto the support;
- observing an incubation period;
- rinsing the solid support; and
- detecting an immunological reaction.

16-24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously Presented) A method for the *in vitro* diagnosis of diseases associated with infections caused by *Tropheryma whippelii*, comprising contacting serum or any other biological fluid of a patient with the antigen of claim 10, and detecting an immunological reaction.

26-28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously Presented) A method for the *in vitro* serological diagnosis according to claim 25, comprising:

- depositing a solution containing said antigen in or on a solid support;
- introducing serum or any other biological fluid into or onto said support;
- introducing a solution of a labeled antibody specific for a human immunoglobulin, which recognizes said antigen, into or onto the support;
- observing an incubation period;
- rinsing the solid support; and
- detecting an immunological reaction.

30. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 1, wherein said culture is not a cell culture in monocyte cells.

31. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 1, wherein said culture is a cell culture in immortalized cells other than monocyte cells.

32. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 31, wherein the immortalized cells are fibroblast cells.

33. (Canceled)

34. (Canceled)

35. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 1, wherein the bacterium is in a cell in the culture medium.

36. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 35, wherein the cell has a dividing time greater than the doubling time of the bacterium.

37. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 36, wherein the cell is a fibroblast cell.

38. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 1, wherein the bacterium is capable of reproducibly and detectably multiplying over time in said culture medium through successive subcultures.

39. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 1, wherein the bacterium has been established in culture through successive subcultures.

40. (Currently Amended) A culture according to claim 1, wherein the bacterium is of ~~the same species as~~ the *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium strain deposited in the CNCM of the Institut Pasteur under Deposit No. I-2202.

41. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 1, wherein the bacterium comprises a rpoB gene comprising a partial sequence amplifiable by primers of a sequence identical to SEQ ID NO:4 or 5.

42. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 41, wherein said culture medium does not comprise monocyte cells.

43. (Currently Amended) A culture according to claim 42, wherein the bacterium is of ~~the same species as~~ the *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium strain deposited in the CNCM of the Institut Pasteur under Deposit No. I-2202.

44. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 43, wherein the bacterium is in a cell having a dividing time greater than the doubling time of the bacterium, and the cell is in the culture medium.

45. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 44, wherein the cell is a fibroblast cell.

46. (Currently Amended) A process of culturing *Tropheryma whippelii* bacteria responsible for Whipple's disease, comprising isolating and establishing said bacteria in a culture medium such that said bacteria are capable of reproducibly and detectably multiplying over time in the culture medium for at least 72 days as detected by inverted microscopy.

47. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 46, wherein said bacteria have a doubling time of 18 days and are in cells having a dividing time greater than 18 days, and the cells are in the culture medium.

48. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 46, wherein said bacteria are in cells in the culture medium.

49. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 48, wherein said cells have a dividing time greater than the doubling time of said bacteria.

50. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 49, wherein said doubling time is 18 days.

51. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 48, wherein said cells are not monocyte cells.

52. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 48, wherein said cells are fibroblast cells.

53. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 46, wherein the establishing step comprises establishing said bacteria in said culture medium through successive subcultures.

54. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 46, wherein the bacteria comprise a rpoB gene comprising a partial sequence amplifiable by primers of a sequence identical to SEQ ID NO:4 or 5.

55. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 46, wherein the bacteria are of ~~the same species as~~ the *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium strain deposited in the CNCM of the Institut Pasteur under Deposit No. I-2202.

56. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 54, wherein the bacteria are in cells in the culture medium~~, and the cells are not monocyte cells~~.

57. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 56, wherein said cells in the culture medium have a dividing time greater than the doubling time of said bacteria.

58. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 57, comprising establishing said bacteria in said culture medium through successive subcultures.

59. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 58, wherein the cells in the culture medium are fibroblast cells.

60. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 59, wherein the bacteria are of ~~the same species as~~ the *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium strain deposited in the CNCM of the Institut Pasteur under Deposit No. I-2202.

61. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 46, wherein said culture does not comprise monocyte cells.

62. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 46, further comprising maintaining the bacteria in culture for at least 72 days.

63. (Currently Amended) A culture comprising a culture medium and a bacterium responsible for Whipple's disease, said bacterium being isolated and established in culture such that the bacterium can reproducibly and detectably multiply over time in the culture medium for at least 72 days through successive subcultures, as detected by inverted microscopy,

wherein the bacterium is of ~~the same species as~~ the *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium strain deposited in the CNCM of the Institut Pasteur under Deposit No. I-2202 ~~and has a doubling time of eighteen days~~,

wherein the bacterium comprises a rpoB gene comprising a partial sequence amplifiable by primers of a sequence identical to SEQ ID NO:4 or 5.

64. (Currently Amended) A process of culturing *Tropheryma whippelii* bacteria responsible for Whipple's disease, comprising isolating and establishing said bacteria in a culture medium such that said bacteria are capable of reproducibly and detectably multiplying over time in the culture medium for at least 72 days through successive subcultures, as detected by inverted microscopy,

wherein the bacteria comprise a rpoB gene comprising a partial sequence amplifiable by primers of a sequence identical to SEQ ID NO:4 or 5, and

wherein the bacteria are of ~~the same species as~~ the *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium strain deposited in the CNCM of the Institut Pasteur under Deposit No. I-2202 ~~and has a doubling time of 18 days~~.

65. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 64, further comprising maintaining the bacteria in culture for at least 72 days.

66. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 1, wherein the bacterium is capable of reproducibly and detectibly multiplying over time in a culture medium comprising fibroblast cells.

67. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 1, wherein the bacterium can reproducibly and detectably multiply over time in the culture medium for 72 days.

68. (New) A culture comprising a culture medium and a bacterium responsible for Whipple's disease, said bacterium being isolated and established in culture in a cell in the culture medium, wherein the bacterium is *Tropheryma whippelii*, and said cell has a dividing time greater than the doubling time of the bacterium.

69. (New) A culture comprising a culture medium and a bacterium responsible for Whipple's disease, said bacterium being isolated and established in culture in a cell in the culture medium, wherein the bacterium is *Tropheryma whippelii*, and the cell is selected such that it does not multiply so rapidly relative to the growth of the bacterium as to cause a dilution effect of the bacterium.